

**CLAIMS**

1       1. A system for generating digitized documents for a digital environment  
2 comprising:

3              at least one scanner provided with a local operator control unit;  
4              a management unit operatively connected to said scanner and including  
5              - inputting means for receiving, from the digital environment, a request  
6              for a digitized document,  
7              - warning means for communicating a request for a digitized document  
8              to said scanner,  
9              - receiving means for receiving from said scanner an acceptance of a  
10             request selected via said local operator control unit, and  
11             - allocation means whereby, in response to the acceptance, a scan  
12             order for generation of the digitized document requested in the  
13             selected request is allocated to said scanner which sent the  
14             acceptance.

1       2. The system according to claim 1, wherein said receiving means includes:  
2       - means for receiving from a first scanner an inquiry concerning information  
3             regarding a request,  
4       - means for offering the requested information, and  
5       - means for receiving from the first scanner an acceptance of a request  
6             selected with the aid of the local operator control means of the first scanner.

1       3. The system according to claim 1, wherein said management unit is also  
2             provided with means for checking whether the requested digitized document is  
3             already available in a required digital form in a connected database.

1       4. The system according to claim 1, wherein said allocation means, when  
2             allocating the said scan order, prevents other scanners from accepting the request  
3             concerned for a digitized document.

1       5. The system according to claim 1, wherein the request for a digitized  
2             document also contains a specification of required properties and format of the  
3             document.

1       6. The system according to claim 5, wherein said management unit, when  
2 allocating the scan order, automatically transmits to the accepting first scanner the  
3 specification associated with the relevant request.

1       7. The system according to claim 5, wherein said management unit  
2 simultaneously with indicating that a request has been received for a digitized  
3 document automatically transmits to applicable scanners the specification  
4 associated with the request.

1       8. The system according to claim 6, wherein said scanner is provided with  
2 means for automatically adjusting the scanning process to generate the required  
3 document in accordance with the specification in the request after allocation of the  
4 scan order.

1       9. The system according to claim 1, wherein the request for a digitized  
2 document also contains a message to an operator of said scanner.

1       10. The system according to claim 1, wherein the request for a digitized  
2 document also contains a precondition for processing.

1       11. The system according to claim 10, wherein the precondition is used by  
2 said management unit as a contributory factor in indicating the received requests  
3 for a digitized document.

1       12. The system according to claim 1, wherein said scanner is provided with a  
2 display and with means for indicating thereon a request for a digitized document.

1       13. The system according to claim 1, wherein said management unit is  
2 provided with means for indicating a request for a digitized document in the form of  
3 a signal perceptible to an operator.

1       14. The system according to claim 1, wherein said management unit is  
2 provided with means for indicating a request for a digitized document only to  
3 scanners which are capable of executing a scanning process in accordance with  
4 the request.

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1        15. The system according to claim 1, wherein said management unit is  
2 provided with means for automatically dividing a first request for a digitized  
3 document into a plurality of second requests with different specifications.

1        16. The system according to claim 15, wherein said management unit is  
2 provided with means for assembling digitized partial documents generated in  
3 response to the second requests, to form a digitized document corresponding to the  
4 first request.

1        17. A management unit for managing a system for generating digitized  
2 documents having at least one scanner provided with a local operator control unit,  
3 comprising:

- 4            -     inputting means for receiving, from the digital environment, a request  
5                      for a digitized document,  
6            -     warning means for communicating a request for a digitized document  
7                      to the scanner,  
8            -     receiving means for receiving from the scanner an acceptance of a  
9                      request selected via the local operator control unit, and  
10          -     allocation means whereby, in response to the acceptance, a scan  
11                      order for generation of the digitized document requested in the  
12                      selected request is allocated to the scanner which sent the  
13                      acceptance.

1        18. The management unit according to claim 17, wherein said  
2 receiving means includes:

- 3            -     means for receiving from a first scanner an inquiry concerning information  
4                      regarding a request,  
5            -     means for offering the requested information, and  
6            -     means for receiving from the first scanner an acceptance of a request  
7                      selected with the aid of the local operator control means of the first scanner.

1        19. The management unit according to claim 17, further comprising:  
2              means for checking whether the requested digitized document is already  
3                      available in a required digital form in a connected database.

1        20. The management unit according to claim 17, wherein said allocation  
2 means, when allocating the said scan order, prevents other scanners from  
3 accepting the request concerned for a digitized document.

1        21. The management unit according to claim 17, further comprising means  
2 for indicating a request for a digitized document only to scanners which are capable  
3 of executing a scanning process in accordance with the request.

1        22. The management unit according to claim 17, further comprising  
2 means for automatically dividing a first request for a digitized document into  
3 a plurality of second requests with different specifications.

1        23. The management unit according to claim 22, further comprising:  
2            means for assembling digitized partial documents generated in response to  
3 the second requests, to form a digitized document corresponding to the first  
4 request.

1        24. A method of making digitized documents available to a digital  
2 environment, comprising:

- 3        - receiving a request for a digitized document from the digital environment in a  
4 central management unit;
- 5        - automatically indicating from the central management unit to one or more  
6 connected scanners that a request for a digitized document has been  
7 received;
- 8        - selecting and accepting the request with the aid of local operator control  
9 means of a first scanner;
- 10      - in response to acceptance of the request, automatically allocating a scan  
11 order by the central management unit to the accepting first scanner for  
12 generation of the digitized document requested in the request; and
- 13      - executing the scan order on the first scanner.

1        25. The method according to claim 24, wherein said step of selecting and  
2 accepting a request comprises:

- 3        - inquiring, with the aid of the local operator control means of the first scanner,

4           for information concerning the request,  
5    -       offering the requested information by the central management unit,  
6    -       selecting a request with the aid of the local operator control means of the first  
7       scanner, and  
8    -       sending an acceptance of the selected request from the first scanner to the  
9       central management unit.

1           26. The method according to claim 24, wherein in response to the reception  
2       of the request for a digitized document a check is first made whether the requested  
3       document is already available in a required digital form in a connected database.

1           27. The method according to claim 24, wherein in allocating the scan order  
2       other scanners are prevented from accepting the relevant request for a digitized  
3       document.

1 *Sub a)* 28. The method according to claim 24 or 19, wherein the request for a  
2       digitized document also contains a specification concerning required properties and  
3       format of the document.

1           29. The method according to claim 24, wherein on allocation of the scan  
2       order the specification belonging to the associated request is automatically  
3       transmitted from the central management unit to the accepting first scanner.

1           30. The method according to claim 24, wherein simultaneously with  
2       indicating that the request for a digitized document has been requested the  
3       specification belonging to the request is automatically transmitted to applicable  
4       scanners.

1           31. The method according to claim 29, wherein after allocation of a scan  
2       order the scanning process for generating the required digitized document on the  
3       first scanner is automatically adjusted in accordance with the specification in the  
4       request.

1           32. The method according to claim 24, wherein the request for a digitized  
2       document also contains a message to an operator of the scanner.

1       33. The method according to claim 24, wherein the request for a digitized  
2 document also contains a precondition for processing.

1       34. The method according to claim 33, wherein the precondition is used by  
2 the management unit as a contributory factor in indicating the received requests for  
3 a digitized document.

1       35. The method according to claim 24, wherein the indication that the  
2 request for a digitized document has been received is made in the form of a signal  
3 perceptible to an operator.

1       36. The method according to claim 24, wherein the indication that the  
2 request for a digitized document has been received is made in the form of a  
3 message on a display on the scanner.

1       37. The method according to claim 24, wherein the request for a digitized  
2 document is indicated only at scanners which are capable of executing a scanning  
3 process in accordance with the request.

1       38. The method according to claim 24, further comprising dividing a first  
2 request for a digitized document into a plurality of second requests with different  
3 specifications.

1       39. The method according to claim 38, wherein the central management unit  
2 assembles digitized part-documents generated in response to the second requests,  
3 to form a digitized document corresponding to the first request.